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WLW  
CINCINNATI

# FORTUNES WASHED AWAY

115  
P.M. - E.S.T.

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A SERIES OF DRAMATIZATIONS OF BETTER LAND USE.

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No. 171

"THE COX WOODS"

August 2, 1941

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ORGAN THEME: DEEP RIVER

VOICES (recorded)

We took it for granted that land was everlasting;

We said ownership of the land insured security.

Tools would wear out, men would die --

But the land would remain.

ORGAN: ABRUPT DISCORD.

ANNOUNCER (cold)

Fortunes Washed Away!

ORGAN: DEEP RIVER, fading behind...

ANNOUNCER

A quiet, studious soldier from Alabama became one of the most feared men during the War Between the States. He gained fame at Hartsville, Tennessee; Lebanon, Kentucky; Harrison, Ohio. The dashing daring of his cavalry spread fear throughout the South and Middle West. Men would shudder, women cry, children wonder at the dread cry "Morgan is coming!"

SOUND: Horsebeats sneak in, rise to crescendo, and fade...



ANNOUNCER (on cue)

His name was John Hunt Morgan -- and his name still carries on at Morgan's Ridge, high tide of his invasion of Indiana. Morgan's Ridge is at the crest of one of the most beautiful groves of virgin timber in the Eastern United States. It is between two main highways, yet the public may pass it by forever and not see it. Here, among these majestic reminders of the forests of yesteryear, is the scene of the 171st consecutive episode of "Fortunes Washed Away."

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

ANNOUNCER (cold)

In 1816, the same year that Indiana was admitted to the Union, a North Carolina Quaker named Jonathan Lindley laid out the town of Paoli, Indiana. That same year, another Quaker named Joseph Cox settled a farm. The story of that farm, a true story, is told by Mrs. Myrtle Mavity, secretary of the Orange County Historical Society.

ORGAN: SYMBOLIC TREES MUSIC BEHIND...

MRS. MAVITY AS NARRATOR

You'd have to see the Cox farm to appreciate it, really. The cattle browse on the pastures, the corn and the wheat grow in the bottoms -- but on the hills, and in the coves, you'll find the woods -- the Cox woods, and they are dear to the people of Orange County. There are Indian mounds in these woods, too -- well, some people say they are Indian mounds, some say they were built by Assyrians or Babylonians. Others say they were built by Peruvians. Who knows? But we, in Orange County, know the beauty of the Cox Woods. It hasn't been so long ago until another Joseph Cox was talking to his nephew, Arthur. They were talking about the days when...(FADE)





ARTHUR

He must have been a brave man. Did he kill many Indians, Uncle Joe?

COX

No -- grandfather Cox was a peace-loving man. He came here to settle down, and farm quietly, and be a good neighbor to all.

ARTHUR

But why did he love the trees so much?

COX

Don't you love the trees, Arthur?

ARTHUR

Why, yes...I suppose so.

COX

I do. Trees are a friend of man. The groves were God's first temples, someone has said. If you'd spend more time in the woods, you wouldn't be in so much devilment.

ARTHUR

Oh, but I spend a lot of time in the woods. Just the other day Slim White and I were hunting and...

COX

Young man, if I ever catch you hunting in those woods, you won't sit down for a week!

ARTHUR

Yes, Uncle Joe.

COX

We have land here, 230 acres of it. There's plenty to feed and clothe and shelter us. But one of the last things grandfather said was to protect that 90 acres of woods, and as long as I live, I'm going to do it!





NARRATOR

Joseph Cox lived in the old homestead and he protected, as the apple of his eye, the 90 remaining acres of the virgin timber that had covered the place. The chinquapin oak and the bitternut hickory, the pignut hickory and the aspen and the tulip poplar, the mulberry and Kentucky coffee -- these were untouched by fire or by axe. Sawmills came and went, wagon builders cut the big poplar and oak of the surrounding country -- but not that of the Cox woods. One night, Slim White was walking through the woods when he came upon...(FADE)

SOUND: Dog barking furiously...

SLIM

What's up, Spot?

SOUND: Dog barks...

SLIM

Oh, oh...I see him now. A coon. Wait'll I light a pine knot so's I can see him better. Then I'll get him.

SOUND : Dog barks...

SLIM

Nope. I can't do it. If old Joe Cox would hear me, he'd shoot me as quick as I'd shoot that coon.

ARTHUR (fading in)

Hey, is that you, Slim?

SLIM

Yeah -- hello, Arthur.

ARTHUR

I thought I heard Spot barking. You crazy fool, don't you know better than to come out here? If Uncle Joe 'd hear you, he'd...



SLIM

What are you doing out here?

ARTHUR (laughing)

Same as you. Got one treed?

SLIM

Big coon. Don't see him right now.

ARTHUR

I'll light this torch.

SOUND: Dog barks occasionally....

ARTHUR

There! That's got it.

SLIM

I see him now -- look at his eyes.

ARTHUR

Yeah -- there he is.

SLIM

Watch me get him.

SOUND: Rifle fired, and coon flops to ground...

ARTHUR

Good boy! Say -- he's a prize! But if Uncle Joe ever hears about this....

ORGAN: SYMBOLIC TREES MUSIC BEHIND NARRATOR



NARRATOR

Only by such sly movements was hunting possible in the Cox woods. Timber prices went up and up, but the Cox grove remained untouched. Occasional windthrows were removed, an occasional dying monarch was cut to protect surrounding timber, but the trees and their precious forest litter remained. They became a tradition, a connecting link with a dead past of big timber and big mills -- a monument to one old man's love of the woods and the living creatures it sheltered. But a year ago, Joseph Cox lay dying...(FADE)

COX

Is that you, Arthur ?

ARTHUR

Yes, Uncle Joe. I'm right with you.

COX

I can hardly see you.

ARTHUR

Are you feeling better?

COX

The pain doesn't bother so much. Would you mind moving my bed over by the window a little more ?

ARTHUR

Of course not.

SOUND: Scraping as bed is moved....

COX

I just wanted to see...as best I can...the trees that have meant so much to me.

ARTHUR

They have been dear to you, haven't they?





COX

Look out there, Arthur -- the sugar maple and the beech and the black oak and the black walnut and the black gum. The trees are a symbol -- a symbol of the fertility of America. They grow tall and straight and stalwart -- reaching up to the sky -- toward God. And down below, their roots anchor the soil firmly, the roots dig deep into the mellow soil that has given America its richness.

ARTHUR

There is a lot of wealth in that grove, Uncle Joe.

COX

More than worldly wealth. Going deep into the woods is like entering a cathedral. Coolness and serenity -- you find yourself in a new world -- a world of peace and harmony.

ARTHUR

I understand what you mean, Uncle Joe.

COX

I won't be on this earth much longer. But those trees were here long before me, protecting this soil of ours -- and my dying wish is that they will be here forever, a symbol of man's love of the soil.

ORGAN: SYMBOLIC TREES MUSIC BEHIND



NARRATOR

A few months later Uncle Joe passed on. The widely scattered heirs demanded a final settlement of the estate. Sell the Cox woods, they said -- and it was sold -- for \$22,000 to a Louisville lumber mill. The trees, mighty monarchs of the forest, last of their kind, were to go. Lumbermen came in, marked and numbered them. Hundreds of men and women and children from all over Southern Indiana flocked to bid farewell to the trees of beauty and majesty so dear to Uncle Joe Cox -- farewell to the "last jewel in the Queen's crown." Then public sentiment came to the rescue...

FIRST VOICE

If the public will raise the money, my lumber company will be glad to return the forest to the people!

ORGAN: FLURRY

SECOND VOICE

Save the Cox Woods!

ORGAN: FLURRY

WOMAN'S VOICE

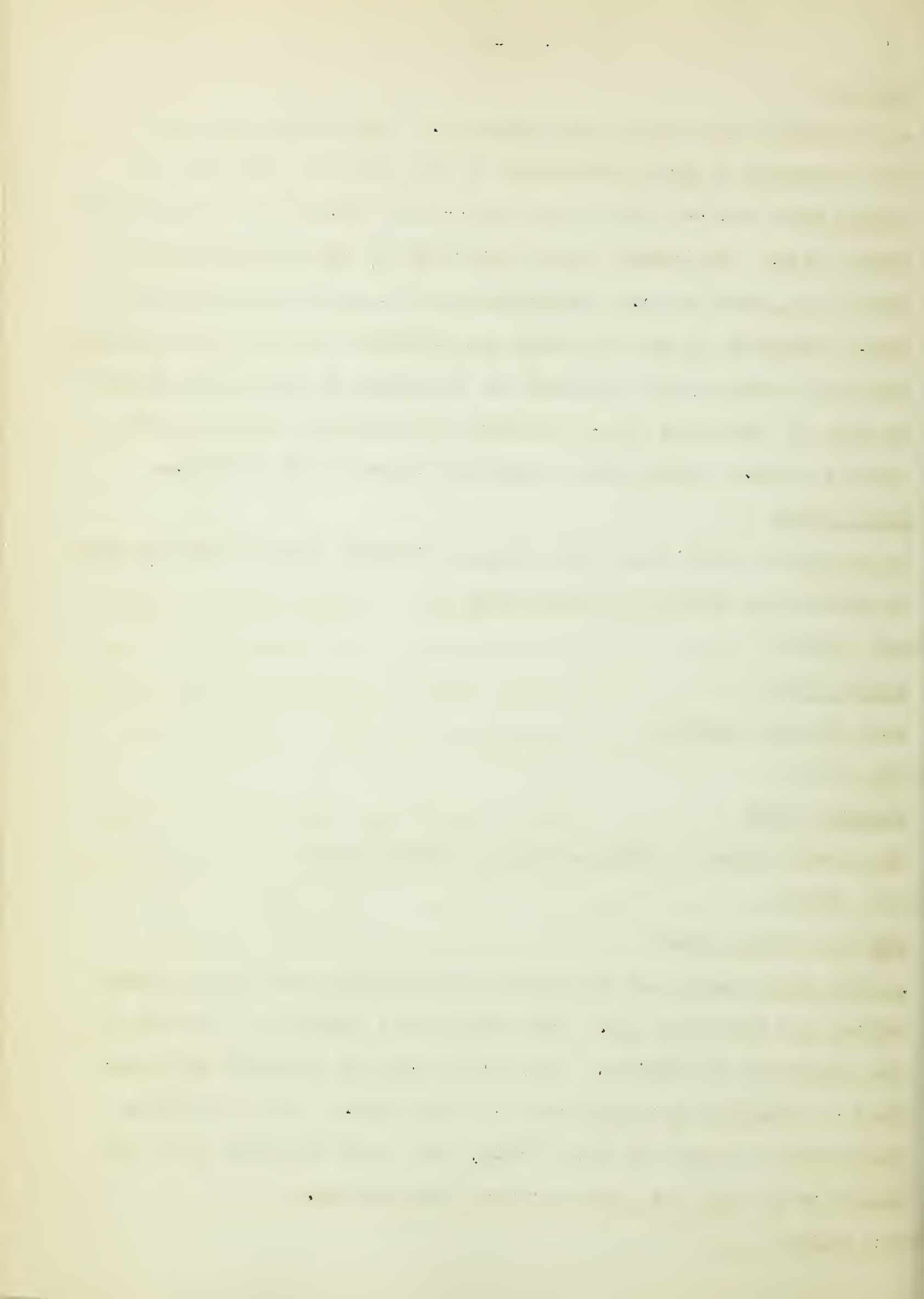
The Garden Clubs of Indiana will do their share!

ORGAN: FLURRY

COX (on filter mike)

...the sugar maple and the beech and the black oak and the black walnut and the black gum. The trees are a symbol -- a symbol of the fertility of America. They grow tall and straight and stalwart -- reaching up to the sky -- toward God. And down below, their roots anchor the soil firmly, the roots dig deep into the mellow soil that has given America its richness.

ORGAN: FLURRY





SECOND VOICE

The Meridian Club has raised the money -- the Cox Woods are saved!

ORGAN: SYMBOLIC TREES MUSIC BEHIND

NARRATOR

Well, that's the story with a happy ending. The Meridian Club of Paoli sponsored the drive. Contributions came in from Maine to California. Now the Cox Woods, grand symbol of the mighty forests that once covered the old hills of Southern Indiana, will remain forever in all their glory. An old man's love of trees will carry on -- as will America.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT

ANNOUNCER

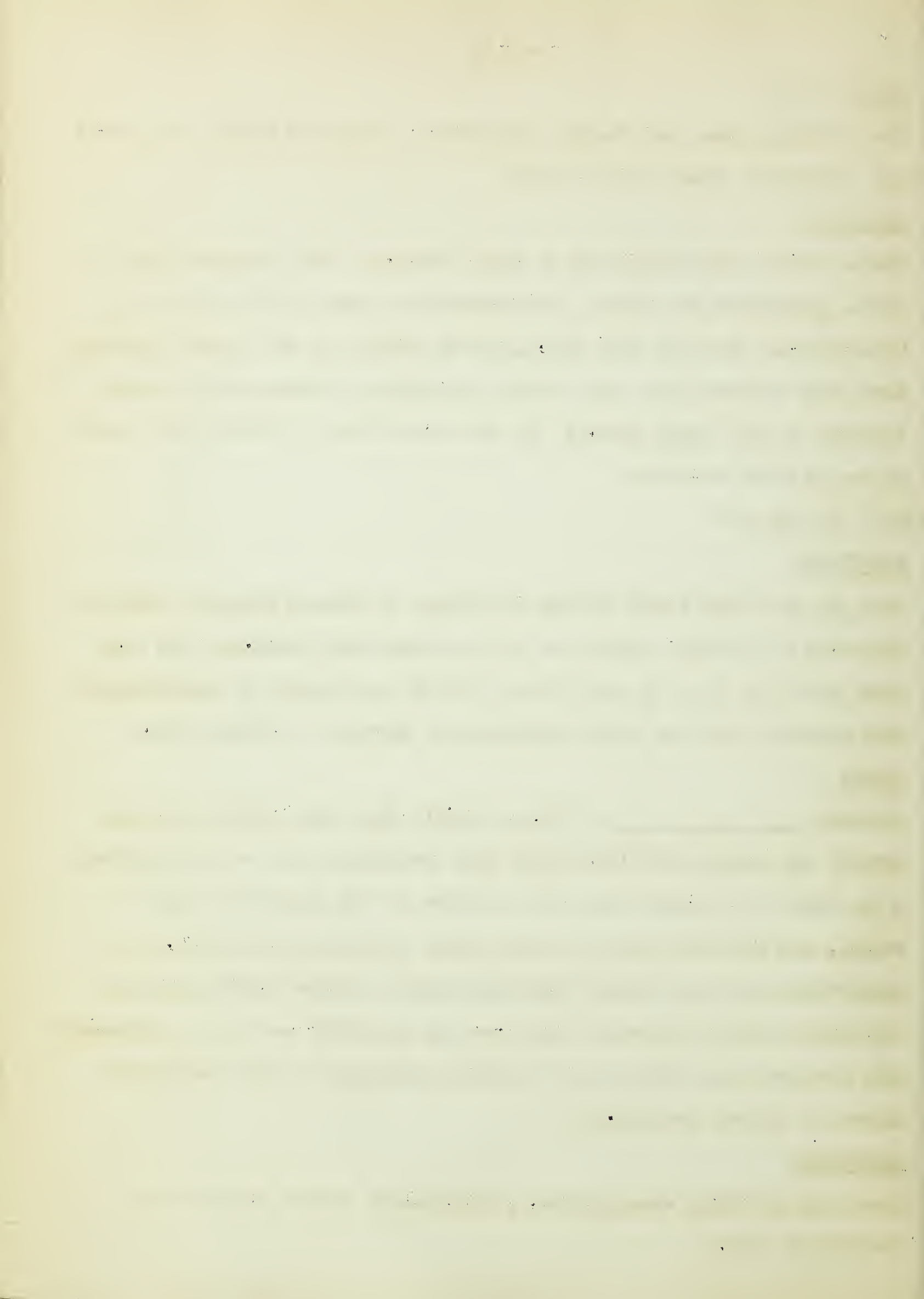
That is the true story of the Cox Woods of Orange County, Indiana, 90-acres of virgin timber now to be preserved forever. And now, once again we turn to the United States Department of Agriculture, and speaking for the Soil Conservation Service is Ewing Jones.

JONES

Thanks, \_\_\_\_\_. Well, I don't know who should get the credit for saving the Cox Woods from becoming just so much lumber. I do think we should take off our hats to the Meridian Club of Paoli, and Raymond Stout of that club; to Rudolph H. Grabow, supervisor of the Hoosier National Forest, Judge Russell Ryan of the Marion County Circuit Court -- and oh, well -- to the thousands who donated the funds to make public purchase of this beautiful tract of timber possible.

ANNOUNCER

From all of these descriptions, this small forest must be an inspiring sight.



JONES

It is. You really feel like you're in a cathedral when you get down into one of those coves. It's on land that never should be farmed, because it's steep and rolling, and would wash away just like so many other farms in that same county have. Soil erosion is a mighty serious problem in Southern Indiana, \_\_\_\_\_, and many a field has been abandoned just because it wasn't handled properly. But getting back to the Cox woods -- there's plenty of wildlife finding shelter there.

ANNOUNCER

Any...snakes?

JONES

Yes indeed -- and I was careful to avoid them. Plenty of birds, too. Just the other day when we were there Ralph Kriebel of our Bedford, Indiana, project pointed out a wood thrush, a white-eyed vireo, and a chewink, just to mention a few.

ANNOUNCER

Well tell me this, Ewing -- now that the Cox Woods has been purchased, what's to be done with it?

JONES

I believe it's the plan of the Meridian Club to donate it to the federal government. It will be managed by the Forest Service as a natural area. Forest trails will be laid out over the area, with rustic log benches at proper places where people may enjoy the beauties of a virgin forest.

ANNOUNCER

Will picnicking and camping be allowed?





JONES

I doubt it. It wouldn't be a natural area with such use. I'm sure there won't be any roadways -- because they want to keep the area quiet and serene for its inspirational value. You see, \_\_\_\_\_, here in the Cox Woods we have another example of proper land use -- crops on land meant for crops, pastures and meadow on land best suited for that purpose, and trees on land meant for trees. And now, the "Eleventh Commandment."

ORGAN: Sneak in DEEP RIVER

ANNOUNCER

"Thou shall inherit the holy earth as a faithful steward, conserving its resources and productivity from generation to generation. Thou shalt safeguard thy fields from soil erosion, thy living waters from drying up, thy forests from desolation, and protect thy hills from overgrazing by thy herds, so that thy descendants may have abundance forever. If any shall fail in this stewardship of the land thy fruitful fields shall become sterile stony ground and wasting gullies, and thy descendants shall decrease and live in poverty or be destroyed from off the face of the earth."

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

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